

STEFAN KÜNZEL and MIHALY NEMETH-CSOKA, citizens of Germany and Hungary, respectively, whose residence and post office addresses are Donato-Polli-Strasse 42, 91056 Erlangen, Germany; Elisabeth-Auer-Strasse 12, 91056 Erlangen, Germany, respectively, have invented certain new and useful improvements in a

METHOD FOR DETERMINING A ROTOR POSITION OF A SYNCHRONOUS MOTOR

of which the following is a complete specification:

METHOD FOR DETERMINING A ROTOR POSITION OF A SYNCHRONOUS MOTOR

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the priority of German Patent Application, Serial No. 10 2004 008 250.2, filed February 19, 2004, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to a method for determining a rotor position of a synchronous motor. The present invention also relates to a data carrier with a computer program stored thereon for performing method, as well as to a computer with a program memory for storing the computer program. The present invention further relates to a machine-tool or production machine with the computer, wherein the computer can be implemented as a controller. In the following description, the term "production machine" is used in a generic sense and also includes robots which generally follow the concepts outlined here.

[0003] Several conventional methods are known for determining the position of a rotor of a synchronous motor relative to the stator of the synchronous motor in order to determine the electrical commutation of the motor

without requiring a position measuring device to provide position information. Many of these methods are based on complex measurements of the inductances of the motor, or on measuring and determining the electromotive counterforce. Such methods make it possible to operate a synchronous motor without employing a position measuring device.

[0004] If the rotor position angle is only determined during ramp-up or start-up of the synchronous motor, for example for determining an offset between the zero position of the position measuring device and the rotor or for moving the rotor to a reference point, then less complex methods can be used to determine the rotor position.

[0005] German patent publication DE 102 15 428 A1 describes a method for determining the rotor position of a synchronous motor, whereby a plurality of current vectors is applied to the synchronous motor in different directions and the absolute value of the current vector necessary for obtaining a defined excursion of the rotor is determined. The motor position is subsequently computed from at least one angular position of the current vector, at which the absolute value of the current vector necessary for achieving the defined excursion is at a minimum. However, the curve describing the absolute value of the current vectors is very flat particularly in the vicinity of the minimum absolute values of the current vectors and the measured values have superimposed disturbances in practical applications. As a consequence, the motor position cannot be adequately

determined.

[0006] It would therefore be desirable and advantageous to provide a method for determining the rotor position of a synchronous motor, which obviates prior art shortcomings and is specifically capable of accurately determining the rotor position in spite of existing disturbances and the flatness of the current vector curve.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] According to one aspect of the present invention, a method for determining the rotor position of a synchronous motor includes the steps of applying to a synchronous motor a plurality of current vectors having different directions, determining absolute values of required ones of the current vectors to obtain a defined excursion of the rotor, determining inverse values of the determined absolute values of the current vectors, digitally filtering using several of the inverse values to determine Fourier coefficients of a first harmonic of the determined inverse values, and computing with the determined Fourier coefficients the rotor position of the synchronous motor.

[0008] According to another advantageous feature of the invention, an opposite mathematical sign can be applied to the determined inverse values in a range of where the excursion of the rotor is negative, before determining the

Fourier coefficients. In this way, the values of the current vectors that are measured in the range of a negative excursion of the rotor can also be used for determining the rotor position of the synchronous motor.

[0009] According to another advantageous feature of the invention, the motor position can be measured with particular accuracy by determining the Fourier coefficients of the first harmonic of the inverse values through a digital filtering process using all inverse values.

[0010] According to still another advantageous feature of the invention, the Fourier coefficients of the first harmonic of the inverse values can be determined by digitally filtering only the inverse values that are in a range where the excursion of the rotor is negative. Alternatively, the Fourier coefficients of the first harmonic of the inverse values can be determined by digitally filtering several inverse values only in a range where the excursion of the rotor is positive. These approaches minimize the computing time as compared to an evaluation process that includes all the inverse values.

[0011] According to another advantageous feature of the invention, a brake can be applied that holds the rotor before applying the plurality of current vectors. By using a brake, the method can be performed independently of the mechanical configuration of the synchronous motor and of other mechanical conditions.

[0012] According to another aspect of the invention, the method can be executed by providing a data carrier with the computer program stored thereon. In addition, a computer can be provided with a program memory for storing a computer program that causes the computer to execute the afore-described method. Advantageously, the computer can be implemented as a controller.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

[0013] Other features and advantages of the present invention will be more readily apparent upon reading the following description of currently preferred exemplified embodiments of the invention with reference to the accompanying drawing, in which:

[0014] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a drive unit with a synchronous motor;

[0015] FIG. 2 is a vector diagram of the rotor or stator currents;

[0016] FIG. 3 is a graphical illustration showing the absolute values of the current vectors as a function of the rotor position angle;

[0017] FIG. 4 is a graphical illustration showing the absolute values of the current vectors, the corresponding inverse values and the excursion as a

function of the rotor position angle; and

[0018] FIG. 5 is a schematic representation of a machine-tool or production machine.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0019] Throughout all the Figures, same or corresponding elements are generally indicated by same reference numerals. These depicted embodiments are to be understood as illustrative of the invention and not as limiting in any way. It should also be understood that the drawings are not necessarily to scale and that the embodiments are sometimes illustrated by graphic symbols, phantom lines, diagrammatic representations and fragmentary views. In certain instances, details which are not necessary for an understanding of the present invention or which render other details difficult to perceive may have been omitted.

[0020] Turning now to the drawing, and in particular to FIG. 1, there is shown a block diagram of a drive unit with a synchronous motor 2, which is controlled by a controller 1. The rotor position of the synchronous motor 2, which in the illustrated exemplary embodiment is defined as a rotor position angle ρ , is measured by a position measuring device 3. The position measuring device 3 can be implemented, for example, in the form of an incremental rotation encoder enables computation of absolute position values only after moving past a

reference point. The position measuring device 3 is connected with the shaft 4 of the synchronous motor 2. Since the shaft 4 is rigidly connected with the rotor of the synchronous motor 2, the rotor position angle p defines the position of the shaft 4. Optionally, a brake 5 can be applied to the shaft 4. Such mechanical or electrical brakes 5 are commonly used to quickly brake a motion or to hold axes without applying an electrical current. The brake 5 can be activated by the controller 1. A useful load 6 can be driven by the shaft 4, for example, the tool spindle of a machine-tool or production machine, or a linear axle of a production machine driven by the spindle. The drive unit can also be used for driving a production machine or any other suitable type of machine.

[0021] FIG. 2 shows in form of a vector diagram the effective directions of the magnetic fields and the applied current vector \underline{I} . The magnetic field of the rotor of a permanent-excited synchronous machine has a major effective direction \underline{d} which rotates together with the rotor. The magnetic field is generated, for example, by permanent magnets disposed of the rotor. A force can be generated by applying the current vector \underline{I} , which can have the form of a current space vector, to the stator windings in a direction \underline{q} perpendicular to the magnetic field. Since the magnetic induction is fixedly defined by the permanent magnets of the rotors, a field-oriented control requires that information about the actual rotor position angle p is available at each point in time. The machines typically include a position measuring device in the form of a transducer with incremental marks or tracks. Because the transducer does not have an absolute reference

position, an initial position value p_0 of the rotor position angle p has to be determined before a controlled startup of the motor.

[0022] A 360° rotation in the vector diagram of FIG. 2 corresponds to an electric 360° rotation. In a multi-pole machine, a mechanical 360° rotation can correspond to several electric 360° revolutions. It should be noted that all described angles relate to the electric rotation. It will also be understood, that a synchronous motor can be implemented not only as a rotary motor, but also as a linear motor, in which case the angles are converted to distances on a linear axis. It is not important for the described method of the invention if the permanent magnets are applied on the rotor side, as in the depicted example, or on the stator side, in which case the current vector would be applied to the rotor.

[0023] The rotor position angle p_0 of the stationery motor will now be determined by the method of the invention. With the brake 5 (see FIG. 1) applied, several current vectors \underline{I} with different angular positions φ (see FIG. 2) are applied to the synchronous motor 2. A current deviation having an absolute value I parallel to the current vector \underline{I} is applied to each of these current vectors \underline{I} in order to generate a small defined excursion $\Delta\beta$ of the rotor against the holding force of the brake. The resulting curve depicted in FIG. 3 shows two minima for the values I of the current vectors \underline{I} that are each offset from each other by 90° and located before and after the rotor position angle p_0 that is to be determined. The excursion $\Delta\beta$ of the rotor changes its direction from negative values to

positive values and in the vicinity of the position of the rotor position angle ρ_0 to be determined.

[0024] The current vector \underline{I} is hereby defined by the equation:

$$I(\varphi - \rho_0) = I \cdot \sin(\varphi - \rho_0) \quad (0)$$

[0025] The torque of a synchronous motor in the voltage control range is proportional to the absolute value I of the current and the sine of the angle φ of the current vector with respect to the major effective direction \underline{d} of the magnetic field of the rotor according to FIG. 1. The torque of the synchronous machine is then:

$$m_1 = k_1 \cdot I \cdot \sin(\varphi - \rho_0) \quad (1)$$

wherein m_1 is the torque and k_1 is the motor constant which is derived from the mechanical and electrical configuration of the motor.

[0026] The return torque m_2 of the braked axle is defined by the equation:

$$m_2 = k_2 \cdot \Delta\beta \quad (2)$$

wherein k_2 is the spring constant and $\Delta\beta$ the excursion measured by the position measuring device.

[0027] In the steady-state, the two torques are identical, so that the following equation governs:

$$k_1 \cdot I \cdot \sin(\varphi - \rho_0) = k_2 \cdot \Delta\beta. \quad (3)$$

[0028] Following the basic idea of the measurement, the respective absolute value I of each current vector \underline{I} is increased until the excursion $\Delta\beta$ reaches a predefined value. In this stationary state, the constants k_1 , k_2 and $\Delta\beta$ can be combined into a single constant K . The equation (3) can then be written in a simplified form as:

$$I(\varphi - \rho_0) = K \cdot \frac{1}{\sin(\varphi - \rho_0)} \quad (4)$$

[0029] In FIG. 3, the absolute values $I(\varphi - \rho_0)$ of the current vectors \underline{I} are plotted as a function of the angle $\varphi - \rho_0$.

[0030] As seen in FIG. 3, evaluating the current minima, as proposed in German patent publication DE 102 15 428 A1, is problematic because the curve shape is quite flat about the minimum position and because the current values are small. In addition, in an actual measurement the measured values, unlike the depicted idealized points, frequently have superimposed noise and other disturbance values, so that the measured minima do not always coincide with the

actual minima. Since a current value may only be determined every 5°, the rotor angle ρ_0 to be determined can also be located between two adjacent measured values, which can result in an erroneous determination of the rotor position angle ρ_0 . Averaging these values, as proposed in DE 102 15 428 A1, does not eliminate the afore-described disadvantages.

[0031] Unlike the method described in German patent publication DE 102 15 428 A1, the present invention employs an entirely different evaluation technique.

[0032] FIG. 4 shows the operation of the method of the invention. Shown in FIG. 4 is again the curve with the absolute values $I(\varphi - \rho_0)$ of the current vectors \underline{I} plotted as a function of the angle $\varphi - \rho_0$, corresponding to the curve of the absolute values I of the current vectors \underline{I} of FIG. 3. According to the invention, the inverse values of the absolute values of current vectors are determined in a first method step. The inverse values $1/I(\varphi - \rho_0)$ are obtain from

$$\frac{1}{I(\varphi - \rho_0)} = \frac{1}{K} \cdot \sin(\varphi - \rho_0) \quad \text{for } \Delta\beta \geq 0 \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{1}{I(\varphi - \rho_0)} = -\frac{1}{K} \cdot \sin(\varphi - \rho_0) \quad \text{for } \Delta\beta < 0 \quad (6)$$

[0033] The inverse values of the absolute values of current vectors have

the opposite mathematical sign in those regions where the excursions $\Delta\beta$ are negative. In the illustrated exemplary embodiment, the excursion $\Delta\beta$ is positive in a range between 45° and 225° and negative in a range between 225° and 45° , as shown in FIG. 4. Accordingly, in the illustrated exemplary embodiment, the inverse values were taken between 45° and 225° , whereas the opposite mathematical sign was applied to the inverse values taken between 225° and 45° . The inverse values $1/I(\varphi - \rho_0)$ have then a sinusoidal dependence. In addition to the curve with the absolute values $I(\varphi - \rho_0)$ of the current vectors \underline{I} plotted as a function of the angle $\varphi - \rho_0$, FIG. 4 also shows curves with the inverse values $1/I(\varphi - \rho_0)$ as well as the excursion $\Delta\beta$ plotted as a function of the angle $\varphi - \rho_0$. The zero position on the ordinate for each curve is also shown. The upper zero position is associated with the excursion $\Delta\beta$, the center zero position is associated with the inverse values $1/I(\varphi - \rho_0)$, and the lower zero position is associated with the absolute values $I(\varphi - \rho_0)$ of the current vectors \underline{I} .

[0034] In the next method step, the Fourier coefficients a and b of the first harmonic of the inverse values of the absolute values of the current vectors are determined by digital filtering over several inverse values. Several digital filtering methods are known that can be used to determine the Fourier coefficients a and b . In the present embodiment, a complex Fourier transformation which is known in the art is used to determine the Fourier coefficients by digital filtering. The first harmonic of the inverse values of the absolute values of the current vectors is defined by the equation:

$$\frac{1}{I(\varphi - \rho_0)} = a \cdot \sin(\varphi - \rho_0) + b \cdot \cos(\varphi - \rho_0) \quad (7)$$

wherein a is the Fourier coefficient of the imaginary part, and b is the Fourier coefficient of the real part.

[0035] The rotor position angle ρ_0 can then be determined from the Fourier coefficients a and b via the relationship:

$$\rho_0 = \arctan\left(\frac{a}{b}\right) \quad (8)$$

[0036] The arc tangent function is determined by properly taking into account the mathematical signs of a and b in all four quadrants.

[0037] Several possibilities exist for digitally filtering the inverse values, i.e., for selecting the values and the number of inverse values to be used for computing the Fourier coefficients. To obtain the most accurate result, it may be advisable to compute the Fourier coefficients by including all the inverse values, i.e., the width of the digital filtering window includes all the inverse values of a complete electrical 360° rotation. If the available computing time is less, then the rotor position value ρ_0 can be determined with sufficient accuracy by selecting for determining the Fourier coefficient only those inverse values where the excursion $\Delta\beta$ is positive. Alternatively, only inverse values associated with negative values of the excursion $\Delta\beta$ may be included.

[0038] It will be understood by persons skilled in the art that subsets of the afore-described inverse values can be used for determining the Fourier coefficients; alternatively, inverse values from both ranges can be used for digital filtering.

[0039] The accuracy with which the rotor position angle ρ_0 can be determined depends on the number of inverse values used for determining the Fourier coefficients, i.e., the determination becomes more accurate with an increased width of the digital filter window. However, this also increases the computing time for digital filtering. In other words, using a large number of measured values for determining the rotor position angle ρ_0 increases the accuracy with which the rotor position angle ρ_0 can be determined.

[0040] A brake does not need to be applied for performing the method of the invention if the rotor can be held in a stationary or rest position by a suitable existing return torque, for example a friction force.

[0041] As shown in FIG. 5, the method of the invention can be performed with a computer 7 having a program memory 8 in which a computer program 9 can be stored. The method of the invention can then be executed by the computer 7 by calling the computer program 9. The computer can be implemented, for example, as a controller. The controller 7 in the depicted exemplary embodiment of FIG. 5 is a component of a machine tool or production

machine 10, whereby the machine tool or production machine 10 can include additional components that have been omitted from the drawing because they are not relevant for an understanding of the invention.

[0042] The computer program 9 also be stored on a data carrier 11, whereby the data carrier can be implemented, for example, as a flash card, diskette, CD-ROM, DVD or a hard drive.

[0043] Machine tools in the context of the present invention can also include, for example, uniaxial or multi-axis lathes, milling machines, as well as drilling or grinding machines. Machine tools can further include processing centers, linear and rotary transfer machines, laser machines, rolling machines and/or gear cutters. These machines have in common that the material is machined along several axes. Production machines in the context of the present invention can include textile, paper, plastic, wood, glass, ceramic or stone processing machines, as well as machines used for forming, packaging, printing, conveying, lifting, pumping, transporting. Furthermore, fans, blowers, wind turbines, lifting gear, cranes, robots, production and assembly lines are also included under the term production machines in the context of the present invention.

[0044] The method of the invention can also be performed with any type of synchronous motor and is not limited to applications associated with machine

tools or production machines.

[0045] While the invention has been illustrated and described in connection with currently preferred embodiments shown and described in detail, it is not intended to be limited to the details shown since various modifications and structural changes may be made without departing in any way from the spirit of the present invention. The embodiments were chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention and practical application to thereby enable a person skilled in the art to best utilize the invention and various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.

[0046] What is claimed as new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent is set forth in the appended claims and includes equivalents of the elements recited therein: